

21 APR 1969

EDUCATION

Making of a crisis: Rebels hustle out dean von Stade, then occupy University Hall

The 'Bust' at Harvard

In one tumultuous day, Harvard was swept up last week into the nightmare of rancor, miscalculation and violence that has beset the U.S. campus since Berkeley in 1964.

To be sure, Harvard has had skirmishes with the student-protest movement—the siege of visiting Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, the forced cancellation of a course distasteful to black students. But Harvard had reason to believe that it might escape a convulsion such as Columbia endured.

The school, true enough, has the same general student mix as other first-rank U.S. universities: a small core of implacably radical and alienated students surrounded by a large mass of moderate-liberals unhappy with the war in Vietnam and racism at home. But, on the whole, students are not unhappy with the quality of their education and though Harvard has grown (6,000 undergraduates, 9,000 graduate and professional students), it is not as big or cold as the megaversities. The faculty is accessible; reversing the usual cry, graduate students complain that professors spend too much time with undergraduates. The university is run as a federal system, headed by a small administration and divided into colleges and houses. And if Nathan M. Pusey, 62 and president of Harvard for sixteen years, has paid more attention to fund raising, foundation work and alumni meetings than to maintaining a close rapport with faculty and students, the system gave much power and visibility to others, such as Franklin L. Ford, dean of the faculty of arts and sciences.

Harvard also had more than ample time to learn from experience. Columbia a year ago underlined the radical script for shutting down a university—from seizure of a building through direct confrontation with the police to the "radicalization" of the

that the radical faction of Harvard's Students for a Democratic Society (estimated membership: 250) would try to provoke a showdown. Talk of a building seizure had been circulating on campus for two weeks. But at an SDS meeting last Tuesday night a proposal to take over a university building met with more bickering than support. The meeting ended with a march of 700 students to Pusey's home at the east end of Harvard Yard; when he did not come out, the radicals taped six demands on his door, Martin Luther fashion. The demands included total abolition of ROTC on campus (the faculty had already voted to drop all credit for ROTC courses and to strip military officers of academic rank, but SDS wanted the three ROTC programs thrown off campus entirely), a rollback of rents in Harvard-owned buildings, and a halt of university expansion in black neighborhoods.

Take-over: At noon on Wednesday SDS called a rally at University Hall, the main administration building that houses the deans' offices and the faculty room with the portrait gallery of Harvard giants. This is where the seven-member Harvard Corporation, the self-perpetuating group which makes major university policy, and the 30-member elected Board of Overseers, who have ultimate authority, hold their meetings. After much debate, the crowd of some 500 students turned down a new proposal to take over the hall. But then the most militant students—members of the Maoist-oriented Progressive Labor Party—grabbed the microphone, called for action, and 60 to 80 of these hard-liners charged into the hall itself.

As the students swarmed into the three-story building, they generated more catcalls and boos than cheers from those remaining in the Yard outside. They ejected the nine deans and their secretaries from their offices. Ford walked out. Deans F. Skiddy von Stade and one student picked up James E.

Thomas, assistant dean of freshmen and carried him outside. A few hours later Ford appeared outside the building together with Fred Glimp, dean of the college. While Glimp held a bullhorn—attorneys advised that Ford had to be heard by all the people inside—Ford announced that the rebels would be subject to criminal trespass charges if they didn't leave in fifteen minutes.

No one left. In fact, the group grew to about 300 during the evening hours, as students came and went bringing in blankets and food and—as it turned out—carrying out copies of university files. The students voted to keep the rooms clean, not to use drugs ("This is not the time to liberate yourself," said one rebel leader). They also rearranged the plastic letters on the first-floor bulletin board to spell out "Che Guevara Hall."

Pusey had a contingency plan worked out in advance. It called for key administration officials to report to the President's home immediately if a building were seized. The executive council, made up of Pusey, the deans of the various faculties and Mrs. Mary I. Bunting, president of Radcliffe, gathered in his home. Dean Derek Bok of the Law School was in the middle of a lecture when he was handed a note telling of the take-over; he canceled the class and ran over. The mood in Pusey's living room was bitter and angry. Everyone was particularly upset about the deans' ejection from University Hall; they also feared that confidential faculty and freshmen records there might be misused—or destroyed. According to one Harvard official, Pusey also consulted the deans of almost every school. After several hours of debate over coffee and sandwiches, Pusey, acting on the council's advice, decided that the only alternative to calling the police "was to do nothing." "It was like Kennedy and the Cuban missile debate," says a department head, "positions changed during the meeting."

The police were alerted at 7 p.m. Harvard's request for police ac-

All this spring it was hardly a secret